



HOME

Home

Writing on the Wall
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Foreword

Our project supports children and families with a parent or close relative in prison. Like the headlines in the papers, society is often too quick to judge and label people or put them in boxes. We have created this book to challenge perceptions and bring together our children, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, students and staff in solidarity to celebrate the highs, share the weight of the lows and see the beauty in the different shapes and sizes that families come in. This book has been a healing process for some, to be given a voice and a platform to have their story heard. For others, this book has been an opportunity to step into their own light and showcase their creative talent. Our families are not to be defined by the actions of their family members but commended for their strength in the struggles they have faced as a result of their parent or relatives' imprisonment. Our families are brilliant, courageous, inspirational and have resilience in abundance.

It was important for us to be led by our children and families in the process of devising and writing this book. We wanted to work alongside our families and give them the tools and space to express themselves and make the book in their own image. At the same time, it was collectively felt important for our students and staff to take part. When a family lets you into their life you go through the motions with them, you worry for them, you laugh with them and more than anything you just want them to be safe and happy. PSS as an organisation has a real family feel in the

way that we value our staff, colleagues and those who access our services, and we really wanted to represent this and break down the barriers between 'you' and 'me,' and just be 'we.'

We'd like to give special thanks to all those that took part in making the book what it is. To all the amazingly talented writers at Writing on the Wall, especially Amy Carrington who has been on the journey with us from a blank page. To our creative and inspirational children and families, our enthusiastic and insightful students, and our warm and open-hearted staff. The book is compiled of a number of short stories, poems and creative artwork. Laugh with us, cry with us and come along for the journey, as our family becomes your family too.

Jessica Schorah

Specialist Practitioner, PSS Prisoner Families

Introduction

Writing on the Wall has been working with community groups in the LCR for 21 years, through our festivals, heritage projects and our What's Your Story? project. We use creativity as a tool to encourage people to tell their story, in their own words and their own way. It is often through exploring our life through writing and sharing it with others, that we can make sense of the world around us. We were very excited to collaborate with PSS prisoner families. We called our What's Your Story? project: Wordplay. Our aim was to move away from the noise, prejudices and misconceptions and make space for the families to create, have fun and tell their story.

The brilliant poet, writer and performer Louise Fazackerley launched Wordplay in February half term 2020 with workshops for children and adults. The pandemic and lockdowns caused some disruption, but with the support of PSS, we adapted. We went on to deliver a 6 week online creative course for adults with writer Margy Macshane, who led us through memories of childhood, Christmas past and the importance of family being whatever it is to us as individuals, there is no right way. In October half term, we were reunited for two days of in-person workshops with playwright Nathan Powell.

The magic in Wordplay began when the PSS family advisors jumped in with both feet. Our creative professionals led us on an imaginative journey, which tapped into our families creative side, helping them to find a way to express the

complex highs and lows of family life throughout an incredibly difficult year. The work they have created for this anthology lights up the page with their energy and love.

These stories and poems invite you into the most intimate parts of family life. There are chippy dinners together, the front room performances for grandparents using the dustpan brush as a microphone, there is family to lean on in times of grief and, most of all, there is love and there is showing up. This collection puts that all together on the page and invites you in, bringing out the memories of your own story, the hard times and the joy.

Thank you to Louise Fazackerly, Nathan Powell and Margy McShane for the creative journey, and lots of laughter. Thank you to Dave, Demi, Lacey and Erin for diving in and all you do to support many families at PSS. A special thank you to Jessica Schorah, your humour, commitment and empathy was the compass for our journey. Thank you to the WoW staff whose hard work, skills and encouragement brought this collection together. But our biggest thanks go to our family writers. Your open, creative, brave exploration of family, home and love in each session charged the space with creativity and joy. We hope you are as proud of this collection as we are.

It has been a life enhancing experience working with PSS and these families. I knew from those first workshops that our time working with the group would be transformative.

Maybe it was creating poems that were sometimes sad, sometimes delightfully bonkers but always honest and important. It could have been the energy you feel in some of the imaginative pieces created in October half term, where we played many games of Werewolves (a very intense game of murder mystery which our young writers were boss at, and I could not keep up with!). Or maybe it was the sketch our young writers wrote in February that saw our co-director Mike Morris singing his heart out to Queen's We Will Rock You on an imaginative Liverpool's Got Talent stage. Wherever the magic came from, this collection will rock you and leave you cheering.

Amy Carrington

Project Manager

Home is...

By Poppy K., Lilly-May, Jess, Dave, Amy, Mike and Louise

Home is the sweet sound of silence

Home is a kitten called Vivien, purring

Home is spaghetti Bolognese,

cookie candles and dirty diapers

Home is a lemon air freshener,

warm as contentment

Home is a huge, soft rainbow teddy

Home is an electric drum kit,

electronic beats

The heartbeat of the house

Da dum, da dum, da dum

Home

Home

Poppy K.

Home is the sound of the kettle boiling
Home is my pet rabbit jumping up the stairs
Home is the smell of tea bags, lunch,
and my rabbit's temporary hutch
and my Grandad's and Nan's cottage pie.
Home is where I practice my music
Home is where I watch my telly
Home is full of love, happiness
and calmness.

Liverpool

Poppy K.

What I like about Liverpool is the football teams. I support Liverpool F.C. and my family does as well. Right now, we are at the top of the league and my school team is too. I am a substitute goalkeeper, so if the goalkeeper gets injured, I go in goal instead. Liverpool is not perfect, but if you think it is then that is just your opinion.

School Feels Like Home

Poppy K.

I feel like home at school with my friends, where we write plays in class.

There is Tom, who likes to dye his hair pink and blue.

There's Thomas who likes Spiderman and there's Charlie who invited me to his Laser Tag party yesterday.

So, we sit down and write plays, 'Skybomb' and 'Time Wars,' are the plays names. We have not written a lot yet, but we decided 'Skybomb' is a video game, where characters meet real people and 'Time Wars' is our own character, who live in their crazy dimension. Around us are displays of electricity, maths, particularly fractions, the Victorian era and Black Beauty looking down on us. It feels like home at school.

Home

Lilly-May

Home is a family place

Home is a place to eat Bueno and watch films

Home is sitting at the marble white table

Home is a sweet cup of tea

Home is smelling our family's favourite, Lasagne

Home is a place to be loved.

At Home At School

Lilly-May

I feel at home in my school because sometimes my teacher picks me to read in front of the class. My home from home makes me feel special. The angry Vikings look at me when I read. I used to feel shy reading in front of the class because I thought I would make a mistake. Now I suddenly feel this tingling feeling of excitement popping up to say hello. I don't make mistakes anymore.

School

Lilly-May

School is a place for children

School is a place for learning

School is a place to make mates

School is about running, jumping,
hugging and loving.

There is no more hate.

This is Liverpool

Lilly-May

In Liverpool we stick together
Like Velcro and magnets.

We might be Liverpudlians and Evertonians,
But we never give up.

We all love the chippy,
Who doesn't?

I only get sausage and chips and that's it.
We all have different emotions

but you can't forget the funny jokes.
We love the footie and the music.

We love the buskers and the beats
We love the cheers not the fears.

We are Liverpool.

Home

Erin

I would miss the sound of the waves crashing against the shore.

I would miss the shout of hello as my mum walks through the door.

I would miss the smell of stew as it brews in the slow cooker.

I would miss my dad telling everyone he used to be a looker.

I would miss my dogs' soft fur as he cuddles on the bed.

Home Means

Maisie

Love, time, happiness, sadness, and
times that we could regret.

But Home is where the heart is,
it's always there.

Two Homes

Simon P.

I've got that much junk idk what to write about
I've got 2 of everything in both houses and rooms
Two beds
Two bedrooms
Two bathrooms
Two kitchens
Two wardrobes
Two mini / big tellys
Two chests of drawers
Two living rooms
Two chairs
Two homes.

Home Means

Peter

Home means dog, Nan, Grandad, Sister

Home means PS4

Home means my Nan's spaghetti boll

Home means karate

Home means respect.

Me

The Fat Cat

Poppy K.

The fat cat sat on the brown mat
by my Mum's brand-new hat.
Mum was out at the shops
Where she found a pound on the ground.
She headed home and had a fright,
her brand-new hat was out of sight.

Stressed At Work

Poppy K.

I'm in work and I'm stuck on my PowerPoint.

Do I ask for help or not?

I see people around me working on their presentations.

Do I ask for help on this calculation?

I hear the coffee machine brewing up a coffee for Ben.

Does anybody have a pen?

I smell the jam doghnuts everyone is eating.

Everyone seems to know what they are doing

but it just looks like I am sleeping.

I Was, I Am, I Will

Poppy K.

I was a cheeky baby who ran in the street with only a nappy on.

I was the one who looked bald but had loads of bright blond hair.

I am a vegetarian.

I am a tech Whiz, if anyone needs help at school, they give my teacher a call and suddenly I am fixing a new board.

I am a very talented musician who likes to practice every day.

I will be a computer scientist to help research a cure for cancer because my mum had cancer and recovered. I also lost my Aunty and my Uncle to cancer.

I will be a successful person,
Hopefully, with all my friends and family.

Miserable Mammoth

Poppy K.

One day Mike the mammoth was going through the snowy forest when he met a female mammoth called Michelle. Mike fell in love with Michelle at first sight because of the way her eyes glistened in the sunlight. He decided to go towards her but then a man-made trap caught Mike and Michelle was scared so she ran off. Luckily the trap was made of wood and Mike was able to break out, but he never saw Michelle again. Mike was very miserable after that and ended up getting the nickname Miserable Mike.

Head, Heart, Soul

Poppy K.

In my head I hold tons of technological facts. Memories of football matches, memories of my mum and dad and of our holidays.

In my heart I hold my family, parkour and reading books.

In my left hand I hold a pencil for drawing and in my right I hold a snooker cue.

From heel to toe, head and soul,

I am kicking a football and jumping over ledges when I do parkour.

If I Was...

Poppy K.

If I was a rectangle, I would be a black couch cushion.

If I was a triangle, I would be a Dorito.

If I was a circle, I would be a camera lens.

If I was a star, I would be the star constellation, Orion's belt.

Twisted Town

Poppy K.

It was the 25th of January 2056 when twisted Billy was on the Albert Dock. He got a message saying it was time to come home so he started his journey back. About two minutes later, he seen twisted Tim from twisted town holding his twisted co-op bag with a box of cornflakes and a bottle of milk on the top of that box. This was weird because he doesn't like cereal and he is gluten and lactose intolerant. I thought that was suspicious but I kept walking. All of a sudden, a robber came, and I remember feeling the worst pain in my head and that was the last thing I remember.

Haiku

Poppy K.

I love to skateboard,
I also love to quad bike,
They are things I really like.

The Medicine of Creativity

Poppy K.

First I pour some blended-up eggs,
then I add the rotten frog's legs,
now I add the eyes that are in a mood
and finally, I add the one-hundred-year-old wood.
All of this put together
creates the new endeavour,
for the medicine of creativity
helps to stop negativity.

The Missing Kite By The Merry-Go-Round

Lilly-May

The cat got a fright
from a loud sound in the sea.
She went on the merry go round
and left her kite on the ground.
As she got off the merry go round
her kite was in the lost and found,
and the merry go round
was only a pound.

Anxious At School

Lilly-May

When I see hard work,
what I can't do,
like fractions on a number line
What I can't do.
When I hear something I don't know
Like rounding to a thousand
It makes me feel low.
When I pick my pencil up in a maths test,
I suddenly shake
And I forget what I need to do.
That's how I feel,
Being anxious in school.

I Was, I Am, I Will

Lilly-May

I was a chubby baby.

I was a brown-haired baby.

I was a baby who liked playing with my teddy thumper.

I am a dancer.

I am a girl who likes sports.

I am a girl who likes writing.

I will be an Olympian and will win gold medals.

I will be someone who helps people who need help.

If I Was A...

Lilly-May

If I was a rectangle, I'd be a laptop watching Netflix.

If I was a triangle, I'd be a button for the shutters coming
down da da da dum

If I was a circle, I'd be a cup for people to drink.

If I was a circle, I would be a world for people to live on.

If I was a singer, I would be a singer like Arianna Grande.

Who Am I?

Lilly-May

I am a sunny day

I am a rabbit who steals food

I am a deep dark blue and

A musical number too.

I am a black silk chair

I am the smell of a man's aftershave and

An emperor's hair.

I am the pop music which gets stuck in your head

I am the Late Late show

I am a cup of coffee in Hollywood.

The Night The 'Pigs' Came

Jess

Alcohol spills, voices raise,
"I swear, you had best get out of my face."

Her pulse begins quickening,
Her stomach is sickening.

One punch thrown and her heart is hollow,
Blood paints the walls, with more to follow.

Dad falls to his knees, brother struggling to breathe,
Calling 999 mum wails and sobs "police please."

Time stands still,
Watching out the bedroom window they will.

So desperate she was, that she wanted the 'Pigs' to come,
To take this night away from her and her mum.

A knock on the door, she leaps for the key,
Two men stood tall, "what help can we be?"

A friendly smile, some words of reassurance,
They opened the living room door with caution.

In the hallway she was instructed to stay,
And wait for the policeman's sign of 'OK.'

In the crook of the door two legs lay still,
And from underneath them, a red river spill.

Now she falls to her knees, and she's struggling to breathe.
Then sat down beside her, she was in disbelief.

A bit goofy and unsure,
Maybe part of the job he hadn't done before.

But a policeman none the less,
Tried to put her mind at rest.

"An ambulance is coming for dad"
"It was alcohol that made them mad"

"We see these things all the time"
"I'm sure everything will work out fine"

"Your brother is going to stay with a relative"
"Don't worry, we will take him to where she lives"

And lifting his hat, he placed it on her head,
"I think this looks better on you instead."

She wiped her tears, and gave a small smile,
She doesn't know why she'd disliked 'Pigs' all this while.

They say that blood is thicker than water,
But it was the policeman who thought about the
spectating daughter.

And to this day, she can honestly say,
"I won't hesitate to call the 'Pigs' right away."

I Am A Mummy

Jess

I am a mummy,
I am tired eyes from late night cries
And stretch marks on my tummy

I am a mum,
I am a warm bockie and cold coffee
And lathered up Sudocrem bum

I am a ma,
I am a broken back and distorted pose,
from buttoning up baby grows, as she rolls afar...

I am a mom,
I am sticky fingers, sick down my top,
throbbing feet that I'm never off, but must go on

I am a mamma
I am a chief risk assessor, clean up messer,
Tackled more dribbles than Mo Salah

I am a mam
I am hearty belly laughs, rubber ducky bubble baths
Crustless butties with jam

I am a mommy
I am splish splashes in puddles, and cosy couch cuddles,
Sporting Bing Bunny

I am still me...

But now I am star struck by Mr Tumble, trip over toys
and stumble

It's a different kind of 'free'

I am a mother

I am the counting of 10 tiny fingers and toes,
Eskimo kisses on the end of her nose, because I love her

To the moon and back.

If I Was...

Demi Lago

If I was a rectangle, I would be a notepad with empty pages waiting to be filled up with people's stories.

If I was a triangle, I would be an Egyptian pyramid, structure, detailed and full of wisdom.

If I was circle, I would be a wheel on the go, traveling with no cares in the world

If I was a star, I would be the sun, bringing light and warmth into people's lives.

Anxious in a Crowd

Dave

So many people everywhere, filling every space.
Keeping tight hold of my little boy
Making sure I could always see his face.
Heart racing as we edge closer to the door
So glad I have never been to this place before.
Feeling so happy as I see the bright blue sky
And even happier as to home I will now fly.

I Was, I Am, I Will

Dave

I was a hysterical, crying, vomiting baby. Oh, how my mum suffered!

I was a silly, adventurous daredevil toddler, just ask my dentist!

I was a sporty teenager sneaking through 5-a-side without paying a dime!

I am a Daddy.

I am a 'immature,' mature student.

I am against all odds, still alive despite driving for a few years.

I will be a Dad.

I will be an embarrassing full on dad dancing dad, whenever humanly possible.

I will however be loyal.

I will have a parenting style similar to Ian Beale or Jim Royal.

What Shapes Me?

Dave

If I was a rectangle, I would be a tablet with YouTube on the screen.

If I was a triangle, I'd be the untouched Quality Street left over at Christmas.

If I was a circle, I'd be a nice warm pizza on a Friday night.

If I was a star, I'd be a famous rich celebrity without a care in the world.

At Sea

Amy

I can see water all around,
No quick exit to be found.

I am listening to what they say
But also worried about the events of the day

I can smell the sea salt and brine
I reassure them 'I am fine.'

The wind ruffles the sail
While they talk of eating kale.

I drag my hand over the side
And feel the cold wet sea.

I confide in my friends I have loved for ages
Even though I feel like we are at different stages

I settle back and let the boat rock me
Maybe I will tell them that I am at sea.

Orla the Witch

Lily

It was 3 a.m. on the 31st of October Halloween morning. Orla woke up at 3 a.m. in an underground lab in Liverpool but what she didn't know was a mad scientist had turned her into a witch. Orla sat up off the desk and looked around. She had no idea where she was, but she was very scared.

She looked around for an exit and found a lift. The lift took her to Maccies where she had been the night before she walked cautiously to the till to order same food but when the waiters looked at her, they all screamed in terror and ran away crying. Orla was so upset she ran into the bathroom to see what was up.

She had been turned into a WITCH. Orla screamed in horror and ran home in tears as soon as she got home to her parents waiting at the other side of the door. Her mother fainted as she saw her and her dad ran scared. Orla was a witch and cannot be returned.

Halloween

Lily

I love Halloween

Trick or treat is the best thing

I love all the sweets.

Shapes

Erin

If I was a rectangle, I would be a temperamental
television

If I was a triangle, I would be a Christmas tree flashing
bright

If I was a circle, I'd be a warm mug of tea

If I was a star, I be on the Hollywood walk of fame.

I Was, I Am, I Will

Erin

I was rosy cheeks and drooley chin
I was curly haired with a cheesy grin
I was competitive, I had to win

I am clumsy and forgetful
I am tall and sometimes funny
I am always hungry

I will be an Olympic Ice Skater
I will be the world fastest Rubik's Cube solver
I will be on holiday ten months of the year.

I Was, I Am, I Will

Louise Fazackerley

I was a fat cheeked baby, face streaked with beans
I was the chocolate milk faced toddler pushing my mum
away from me at the nursery door, even then saying, 'I
can do it all by myself.'

I was scabby knees, jumble sale roller skates,
A terry blue dress from the catalogue.
It said New York. New York.
I was Wigan. Wigan.

I am books, and boxing gloves and floating boats
I am chip butties and full-fat coke
I am all smiles, all ears, all hope.
I can do it all by myself.

I will be a silver spun witch writing spells
I will be storms, and calms and found shells.
I will be a Zumba rave granny with Morris dancing bells.

Lonely At Sea

Zack Bakir

All I see is the blue
going forever
The sea and sky both merge
together
The crash of the waves and
the seagulls speaking
I really hope my boat isn't leaking
I smell the salt of the water
and my own unwashed shirt
That constantly reminds me of my own dirt.
The taste of burger I keep thing about.
I wish I had loads, too many to count.
I hold the side of the boat
The walls dig into my skin
I feel so lonely
Floating in my tin.

Tim the 2nd's Life

Maisie

There was once a boy named Tim who was sitting quietly by the Christmas tree at 12:30 at night waiting for Santa to come. One thing he never knew was that he was sitting outside Nando's. He felt as if he was at home with his family but in reality he was all alone lost in the city of New York. It was 5 years since he became lost. His whole family were going out shopping for presents and they came across a crowd where Tim was carried away from his family. At home he had 5 cats, 2 dogs and 1 turtle, he loved them a lot and he was then realising he will never see any of them again. He prayed every night. He would say please help me get my family back.

The Lost Princess

Poppie

Once upon a time in a faraway land there was a queen who was sick, and she was days away from having her new baby princess. So, all her servants went to find the flower of healing. It is a yellow rare flower. The servants found the flower and made the queen better.

Then the next day she gave birth to her baby and named her Rapunzel. But she was not a normal child she had magical hair. When you brush it, you sing a song, and it will keep you young forever. But one day everyone in the Kingdom was asleep the princess started to cry, and the parents woke up and ran in and in the window, there was a woman holding Rapunzel and in a blink of an eye she was gone and since that night no one saw the princess again.

When it's the princess' birthday everyone let go lanterns in hope she will see them and come home. The princess was locked in a tall tower so she would never get out. Her kidnapper's name was Gothel but because Rapunzel thought that she was her mother, so she called Gothel, mother. Gothel kept Rapunzel in the tower so she can keep Rapunzel forever.

For years and years since Rapunzel was a child. Gothel was using her hair so she can stay young forever. The older Rapunzel got the longer her hair got. Every day

Gothel would go out and all Rapunzel would do is paint, clean, cook or read. One day when Gothel left on Rapunzel's eighteenth birthday, Rapunzel looked out the window and saw the lanterns, but she thought it was just a tradition because she always sees them on her birthday. But after years and years of seeing the lanterns, she built up the courage and asked mother Gothel if she could leave the tower and see the lanterns. Once mother Gothel got home she asked,

'Mother Gothel can I go and see the lanterns?' and mother Gothel said 'No it's too dangerous outside.'

The next day, mother Gothel left as usual, and Rapunzel was sat bored in the tower. So, she planned her escape.

Sleepovers

Poppie

I like sleepovers

Sleepovers are fun

Sweets at sleepovers are yummy.

Holidays

Simon P.

My name is Simon,
Trick or treat is the best thing,
as good as Christmas.

Who Am I?

Bretta K.

I am a threatening storm
waiting to strike,
I am a lightening fork
on a dark, dark night,
I am the vulnerable baddie
In the 'line of duty,'
I am the callous youth of
'This England's' beauty,
I am the Kirkby kid who
showed you can,
I am the beating heart drum
For the everyman.

Product of the Past

Bretta K.

In my head I hold memories of people and places past,
the smell of my Nan's toast after our communion fast.

The counsel of my big sister through my teenage years,
though not always heeded at the time, now I'd be all ears.

My Mother's warmth and wisdom, her beautiful singing
voice,
ever fair she taught her children that we always had a
choice.

The calmness of my Dad who gave me the love of books,
who toiled to care for eight of us wielding his dockers
hook.

Midnight Mass

Bretta K.

I was 11 or 12 the first time I was allowed to attend Midnight Mass. Dressed in my Christmas clothes, a brand-new coat from C&A, a mini kilt and purple polo necked sweater, I was feeling very grown up. My elder sister and I headed out with Mum. Dad stayed behind to mind the younger kids.

Living on a new council estate we had no church of our own yet, so attended the small ancient chapel that was in the centre of Ford cemetery. At the gates two men stood lighting the way with torches that looked like sticks on fire and the long dark path was lit by several other men lining the path right up to the doorway of the chapel.

As children we'd always been frightened in the cemetery, even in daylight, but this was magical, and I felt as if I'd been let into an exclusive club. The church nativity was decorated with ivy and holly boughs, probably collected from the cemetery grounds and the amber glow of the gas lights gave an impression of warmth that wasn't really there. The cold seeped up from the flagstone floor and made us stamp to keep our feet from freezing.

When mass was over, we came out to a glorious sight of snowflakes drifting down and a dusting of white covered the gravestones making them look less scary. Everyone wanted to shake your hand and wish you Merry

Christmas, it was like something from a Dickensian novel.

We re-grouped with Cousins, Aunties and Uncles and went to my Nana's house to break our communion fast. Tea and toast for us and sherry and whiskey for the adults. In Nana's small back kitchen, the sweet and spicy smell lingered from the Christmas puddings she had cooked earlier, one for each family. Wrapped in tea towels they had been cooked in the old metal water boiler, her washing machine, and were now cooling awaiting collection.

Back home I can't even remember getting into bed, but I remember that night so clearly, it was my 'rite of passage' into the grown-up world. My one regret is not getting the recipe for the Christmas puddings from my Nana. I can never replicate them. Hers had a thick skin on the outside and my dad used to fry the leftovers with bacon for his breakfast on Boxing Day.

I Remember When...

Danielle

I remember back in 1993 when my mum and dad thought it amazing to buy me all the Simpsons characters in teddy form, because I loved them. Thinking back, they were my favourite toys and came everywhere with me.

I remember back in 1994 when weekends were only for staying with your Nan and Grandad.

I remember when the weekends were full of fun and Nan and Grandad were always on hand for either play or breakfast in bed. My Nan always had a pan of scouse, hot pot or even bacon ribs on then at mealtimes it turned into a scene from feeding at the zoo.

I remember when I loved my pink shopping trolley, it went everywhere with me. I'd stuff it as full as I could with all the most important things to me; dolls, clothes and even ice pops!! I was well prepared.

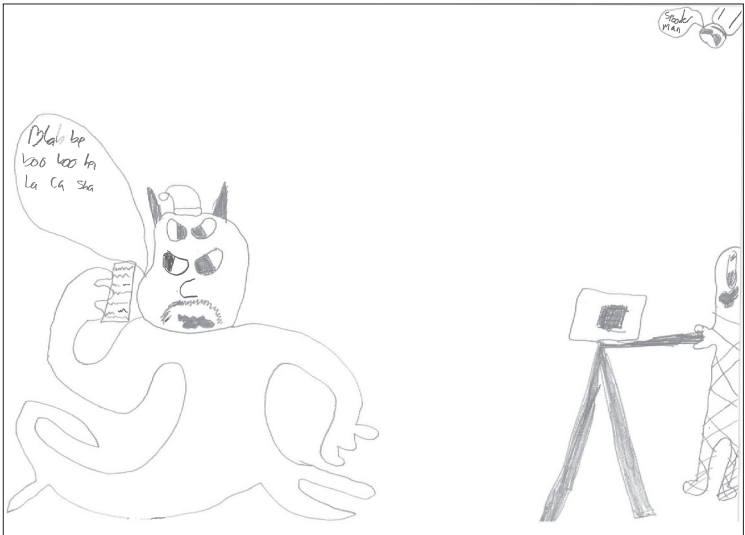
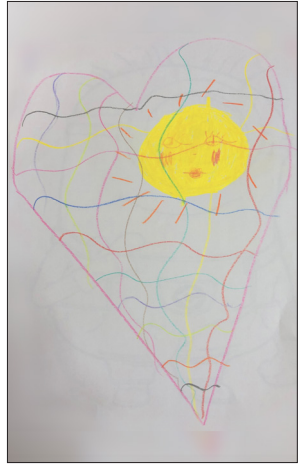
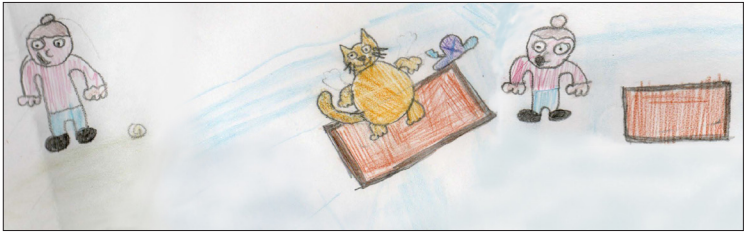
Now my brother is nearly 30, it's hard to imagine that back, then I'd put him in the washing basket because he was my baby and he needed to sleep- we'd have Nan and Grandad up till 3am playing house and they were more than happy.

Now the years have gone by and Nan and Grandad have left us, but I can't resist when walking past a tall brush and shovel to grab it and do a rendition of Boyzone's

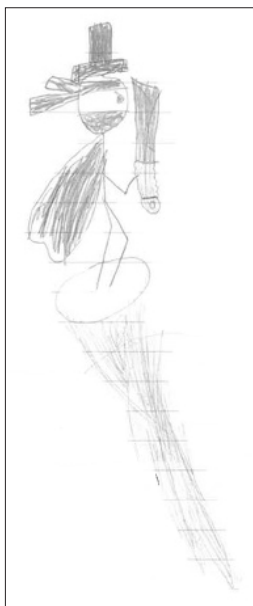
don't love me for fun girl, like my brother and I did in the 90's in a concert we'd put for our grandparents in their front living room.

I remember back in 2004 when my parents and all my aunts and uncles would reminisce these memories and I would cringe at the thought.

But now in 2020 these are the memories I cherish and cling on to. These memories made me and it's good to see my children do the same cringed look as I once did when these stories are told.



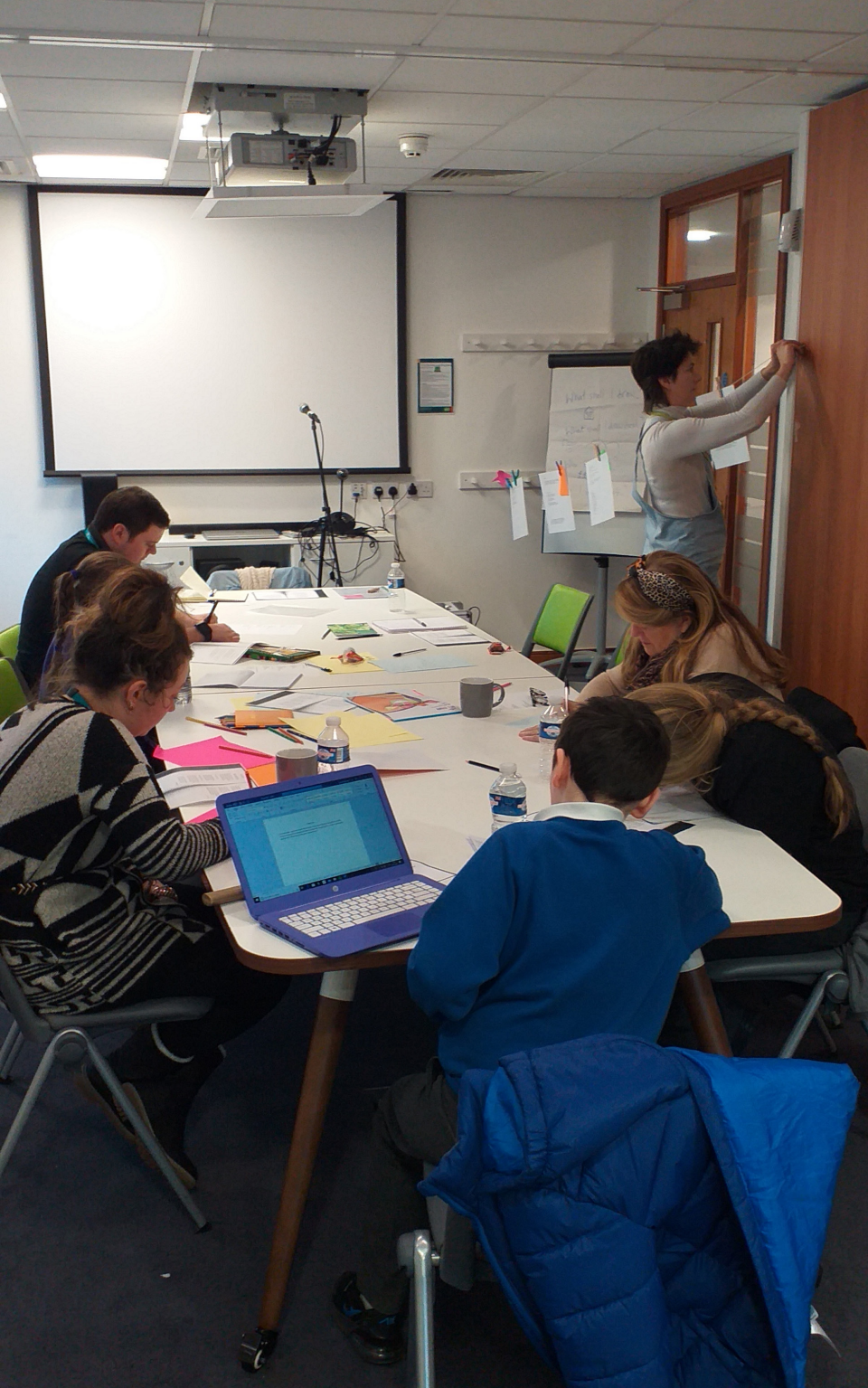
- 1) *The Fat Cat* by Poppy K.
- 2) *Ice Cream, Eggs and Bacon* by Poppie.
- 3) *Heart Sunshine* by Remaya.
- 4) *Alien Drama* by Poppy K.
- 5) *Missing Mum.*
- 6) *Poppy's Lion.*
- 7) *Ninja* by Jake.





Writing on the Wall and PSS started our journey in creating this book in February 2020. Poet and Performer Louise Fazackerley led us through creative workshops, exploring the ingredients that make a home. From our favourite items, like Peter's Motorbike to favourite family meals, treasured memories and hopes for ourselves and our families in the future. Here are a few of these talented writers in action, cooking up some creativity.





Family

Be Grateful

Peter

Be grateful for
Your parents they
Try their best
Some kids would
Die for their
Parents to be
Around, don't take
Advantage of
Them cause one
Day they won't be
Here.
Make the time
you have with them count
life is short
so make it count
make sure the time you have
are the happiest times ever
with the people you love
make sure to be grateful
for their hard work
in bringing you up.

Family To Me

Peter

It means love, arguing, fun times, sad times, parties,
motorbikes

Laughing, joking, cousins, Uncle, Auntie, Mum, Nan,
Grandad,

Social worker, Dad

Idk Idk Idk.

Family Means

Peter

Family means Love

Family means arguing

Family means good times and sad ones

Family means having fun

Family means motorbikes

Family means a roast on a Sunday

Family means Dad, Nan, Mum, Grandad, Uncle Kenny,

Auntie Lesley and Dominic

Family means living with me Nan

Family means happiness.

Friendship

Peter

I think this means friendship
and I think it means partnerships
and family members should be best mates as well
and it reminds me of my mates jokin' around.

Parents and Grandparents

Leanne and Elaine

In my head, I hold my wonderful memories that I have made with my favorite people.

In my heart, I hold my love for my four Cassidy/Croker grandchildren.

In my hands, I hold my bank card in my left hand and my money in my right.

From head to toe, heart and soul I am the rock for my family.

What Would You Miss?

Leanne and Elaine

When we were kids and lived at home

I would miss this

And now my grandkids are like me and my sisters

When we were younger

I would miss this.

Family Means

Lily

Family means a lot to me,
all the fun and the cups of tea.
Halloween and Christmas are my fave,
Sweets and presents, all the range.
Love spread through all to see,
the more reason family means so much to me.
Football is also something that I love,
Playing footy with my brother to watching it on tele
These are some of my best memories
There are loads of reasons why I love my family.

Halloween with the Family

Lily

Halloween is very fun
but Halloween with the family is better.
All the sweets and treats
could not be greater.
Knock knock, trick or treat?
Give me something good to eat.
All the chants and all so fun,
it took forever for mum to do one face paint because of
me and my sisters
but when that was done
Poppie and Maisie would answer the door
to all the friendly monsters and ghouls
But the best bit was when we would go out and scare
the neighbour to our rewards of all the yummy sweets
that could never be eaten at once
unless you ate no lunch.

Hands

Lily

All the generations

Young and old

Auntie's, Grandfathers, Mothers, Grandmothers, to the
kids

All this is what makes a family.

TikTok's

Maisie

I force my sisters
To do the silly dances
It's better with them.

Family Means

Maisie

Mum, sisters,
movie nights and TikTok's.
Fights and teasing
but always make up.

Family Means

Poppie

Family means many things not just hugs and kisses
it is also someone to chat with.

Someone to talk to when you're feeling down.

People to spend holidays with

People to open presents with on Christmas morning and
on birthdays.

People to dress up with on Halloween

Someone to spend Easter with

A shoulder to cry on

Siblings to laugh with, have sleepovers
and dress up parties with.

Sometimes siblings are the cause of me being sad,
but they're always there to fix it.

Family generations go on forever

From the first family member to the next, then the next,
then the new baby.

Whatever happens family lives forever.

Family Means

Simon P.

More than love

Issues

Niceness

Ignorance

Open minded

Never stop

Support.

Hands

Simon P.

When I see the picture, it reminds me of friendship and family

because 5 hands equal 5 hearts

and all of them hearts equal friends and family

equals family and friends.

Looked After Child

Bretta K.

LAC, that's what they call her
but she's named after a flower of remembrance and bears
no resemblance
to the acronym they afford her

Lack in the love that she
should be shown without condition by those in parental
or familial position
encourage her to be

Lack in the right to choose
her every action is recorded but unaware she is not
rewarded
freedom not hers to lose

Lack in places to run
Abandoned by circumstances not within her control the
unseen takes its toll
On the person she will become

Lack of direction
By way of intelligence and savvy unhindered by the
baggage she may carry
Her smile is her protection

Lack of a permanent address
Uprooted and replanted in a world that is slanted to
protect the privileged few
She can still progress

With love and affection, like the flowers that sprung from
the soldier's blood
She'll learn to thrive in a new neighbourhood
and lack nothing in the end.

A Fortnight in May

Bretta K.

"I'll take the two weeks," my dad said, I was waiting for him to say which two. Just as in one of his favourite jokes where, a judge sentenced a man to two weeks in prison, the man said thanks very much can I have the last in July and first in August. But this was no joke.

My terminally ill Dad asked the hospital doctor how long he had, the doctor reluctant to give a precise timeline said between 48 hours and two weeks. "I'll take the two weeks," Dad said "but I want to go home." The doctor advised against it, but my eldest sister was adamant that he would get his wish and told him that we, the family, could cope.

Home is the four-bedroom council house that he and Mum had lived in for over forty years, raised their 8 children and as if that wasn't enough, two grandchildren. As the ambulance pulled up, we were all there awaiting his arrival. He was wheeled up to the front door and, despite his weakness, insisted on walking into his own home one last time.

Once settled in a bed in the front room, the tension of the last few weeks was lifted, and a party atmosphere prevailed. Chippy teas were ordered and after wrestling with Mums ancient corkscrew the wine flowed. The noise was reminiscent of when we all lived together in

this house, all vying for attention, the loudest usually to get it. Among the chaos of all of us, grandchildren, dogs and the telly no one heard the doorbell until it rang incessantly. I think my sister-in-law answered and a very stern looking nurse entered surveying the scene with a disapproving look.

The kitchen worktop was littered with the remnants of our chippy meals and it looked like everyone had a drink in their hands, including the dog. I think she was expecting to come into a house already in mourning or sitting around quietly awaiting the inevitable, not the raucous reception she encountered. She was not impressed. Fortunately, she only visited twice and the nurses who came daily were lovely, so caring and gentle with my dad.

Unbeknown to us, Dad had been put on the inhumane Liverpool Pathway, which basically meant patients were refused food and drink, and medication was increased to hasten their death.

The eight of us moved back in.

All under the same roof again, we reverted to the roles we had in childhood the pecking order almost the same. The older ones took charge and set up a rota so that Dad

was never on his own. My brother, a Seaman, worked out the shifts using his nautical knowledge and we all dreaded getting the Middle watch, Midnight to four in the morning. We played Dad his favourite music, read from his beloved books and the grandchildren fed him yogurt and cake.

If he felt like having a beer or a whiskey, we gave it to him. That was until nurse Rached caught us and demanded we stopped all food and liquids.

Determined to the end he got his full two weeks, and we shared those precious 14 days and nights with him and had the opportunity to say our goodbyes.

Separation

Danielle

We knew the day was coming, it had been coming for a long time. We thought we were prepared for it. I'd planned a lot so it wouldn't be as hurtful as it was.

The day arrived and you were torn from my arms by the teacher. I knew this was the last goodbye for a while, not that you did. But it was okay, I knew it weren't forever. I knew we'd be lucky enough to be reunited, so our temporary separation gave me hope.

When I arrived, I put up my photographs of you and all your little drawings. I made sure that you surrounded me every day and I had lots of memories to reminisce. My heart was broken in 2 that day, but hope allowed to be sewn back together.

The day finally came 11 long months later. We were all back together! And hope that had been my best friend and comfort, was no longer needed. So, for the next however many years gratitude is our friend. Separation made me sad, angry and hurt but now all's it makes me, is grateful and thankful we're all back where we belong, and separation won't happen again for a long, long time.

‘What Am I Most Grateful For?’

Danielle

I'd like to thank you
For taking a minute or 2,
To sit with me while I explain to you,
The things that I'm most grateful for.
Let me start with my new front door,
A key to my first home with a world to explore.
Independence came and it's not the same,
Not living at home, away from my mum and dad,
Left my bank balance remembering what I once had.
I had the best time of my life working all over the
Northwest,
Sometimes putting me to the test.
However, helping people to bring much needed love and
joy,
Eventually led to giving birth to my baby boy.
Then 4 years later came my daughter.
Our life has been full of twists and turns,
But nothing in this world I would change for the world.
We are lucky enough to have our home, health and
happiness,
What more can I ask for? Nothing more and nothing less.

Family

Lacey D.

It can be who is given to us through blood or who we choose, either way it is a bond we will never lose.

Family and experiences are what's brought me here, a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen, working together to make them changes.

Starting out fresh and new, getting all my learning from you.

A social work student is what my title says but here to work with you and get there eventually is how my goal pays.

PSS, is like a family, makeups and breakups, highs and lows but most importantly everyone grows.

Times can become tough and it's good to hit pause, taking time out to go for a tour.

Now, slowly walking through the crunchy leaves, snow falling fast. Sitting down, headphones out, oh how the snow now falls slow and, in that moment, taking a deep breath in, I feel calmer, no more drama.

Relating to the different feelings, I too can struggle just like you. But here we are getting through, I only want the best for you.

So I hope it all works out and thank you for giving me your time, I am at the end now and funnily I cannot rhyme.

Afterword

Congratulations to all those who participated in PSS Home for creating such moving and inspiring writing, and for sharing their stories with us throughout the project.

Writing on the Wall, the Liverpool City Region's Arts Organisation of the Year, celebrates writing in all its forms through our two annual festivals and year-round projects, working with a broad and inclusive definition of writing embracing literature, creative writing, journalism, nonfiction, poetry, song-writing and storytelling.

We work with diverse communities across the Liverpool City Region to promote and celebrate individual and collective creativity, publishing high-quality work and supporting health, wellbeing and personal development.

If you have a story to tell, or would like to take part in, or work with WoW to develop a writing project, please get in touch – we'd love to hear from you.

Madeline Heneghan and Mike Morris

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